

PROPOSITION NO. 1
GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS FOR A NEW POLICE STATION
AND RELATED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS;
0.65% SALES TAX RATE INCREASE TO 5.15%

Shall the City of Homer incur debt and issue general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed Twelve Million Dollars (\$12,000,000) to finance the planning, design and construction of a police station and related capital improvements; and shall the rate of City sales tax be increased by sixty five hundredths of one percent (0.65%) to five and fifteen hundredths percent (5.15%) from April 1 through September 30, for the purpose of paying debt service on the general obligation bonds, until September 30 in the year when the City has received funds from the tax that are sufficient to pay all debt service on the bonds?

The bonds shall be secured by a pledge of the full faith and credit of the City. (Ordinance 16-30(S-2)(A-2))

Explanation of Payment Mechanism: The seasonal sales tax will add 65¢ for every \$100.00 in taxable purchases. An \$80 water and sewer bill, for example, would have an additional 52¢ added during the months of April, May, June, July, August and September.

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1) **Question:** Why do the public safety buildings – the police station and the fire station – need to be replaced now?

Answer: Homer has grown considerably since the existing buildings were constructed. Annexation, expansion of the core center of town, and new neighborhoods together with an expanded population require additional human resources to deliver First Response services. As additional personnel are added to the physical plant, and additional demands for space allocations are made, the built-in areas for expansion are quickly filled. As the workspace becomes overcrowded, sacrifices are made that affect the quality of the workplace. Fire and EMT calls are at an historic High. The police station is no longer adequate to house the personnel and services located there. The fire station also has some serious aging issues, but the decision has been made to make some strategic upgrades and deferred maintenance repairs to extend the life of the station. The City Council has authorized the funding for this construction and the repairs and renovations are underway.

- 2) **Question:** Couldn't we tear down the existing buildings and build at the same location?

Answer: The committee, the architect, and key personnel from public works, spent considerable time examining the possibility of phasing new buildings on the existing lot. It was determined that restraints in both the lot size and placing critical facilities in temporary homes would be impractical and add a lot of expense to the project.

- 3) **Question:** Why is the HERC location the best site?
Answer: The 4 acres located at the corner of Pioneer Avenue and the Sterling Highway are owned by the city; there is no acquisition cost. The site contains two existing structures, one of which can be incorporated into the new police station. The site has existing water, sewer, and electrical services as well as existing paved and unpaved parking. The costs associated with finding or improving an existing building or a lot in the core area of town would likely double the cost of the project.
- 4) **Question:** Is there room at the HERC site for a future new fire station?
Answer: Yes, the site plan indicates where a future fire station may be built east of the HERC building.
- 5) **Question:** What happens to the existing uses at the HERC site?
Answer: There currently two main uses of HERC facilities: the skateboard park and the old school gym. These will not be “orphaned”. The gym activities will be relocated to the new SPARC facility scheduled to be constructed later this year and located nearby. A new skateboard park will be located elsewhere on the HERC site, and funds for its construction are included in the project cost.
- 6) **Question:** Can’t we remodel or expand the existing buildings?
Answer: Essentially, the city is doing exactly that. The fire station is being remodeled and the HERC building is being expanded and repurposed to become a police station.
- 7) **Question:** If we build new buildings what happens to the old buildings?
Answer: After the new police station has been constructed, and the old building vacated, the City Council will decide the disposition of the old building.
- 8) **Question:** What have you done to reduce costs?
Answer: Cost considerations, given the fact that no state or federal grants are known to be available for construction assistance, have heavily influenced the decisions made in this project. Repairs are much less costly than replacements and that is the solution for the fire station. Incorporating existing space with minimal remodeling costs will greatly reduce the costs of new construction, and that is the solution for the police station. We are working diligently with the architect and the general contractor, acting as our construction manager, to arrive at a project cost that can be supported this fall in the bond proposition.
- 9) **Question:** Do we really need a shooting range?
Answer: A shooting range has been on the list of capital improvement projects for a number of years. The department believes this is a critical training facility. By locating it in the repurposed HERC building classroom space, the costs have been seriously reduced. It should also be available, at specific scheduled times, for paid public use.
- 10) **Question:** How much will a new building increase the cost of operations?
Answer: While the cost of maintaining a larger building will increase, there must be some savings in the fact that new buildings require less maintenance and upkeep than older buildings. It will be more energy efficient, provide a healthier work environment for the employees and reduce other operating costs. Public Works believes \$144,000 to be a conservative number, and adequate for planning purposes.